REFORMATION TODAY '77

IS PURITANISM DEAD-ENDED?

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Liverpool, 1978

	9.30 a.m.	11.30 a.m.	4.30 p.m.	7.45 p.m.
TUESDAY 3RD JANUARY	Theme: The living and growing church		The significance of Andrew Fuller *Frank Ellis*	The living church *Erroll Hulse*
WEDNESDAY 4TH JANUARY	The nurture of the young convert *Chris Robinson*	The reformation of the Reformed —A cry for contemporaneity	Discussion Period	The growing church *Harry Kilbride*
THURSDAY 5TH JANUARY	The principles of church planting *Keith Davies*	Discussion Period	Catechism—its use and abuse *Geoff Thomas*	Heaven or Hell? *Herbert Carson*

The public are invited to the evening meetings. See pages 25 and 26 for details.

Write to John Rubens for information:

36 Longden Close, HAYNES, BEDFORD

Editorial

David C. C. Watson defeated at Industrial Tribunal

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THE HISTORY OF BRITAIN A TEACHER HAS BEEN DISMISSED for wishing to teach The Bible as plain truth. Professor Edgar Andrews, a defender of Mr. Watson at the Tribunal, stated that after a careful study of the Herts. Agreed Syllabus section on Genesis, he found it quite illogical and 'hopelessly out of date'. In his opinion, no honest or intelligent person could possibly follow its recommendations. At the Tribunal it was pointed out that Mr. Watson's position was that stated in his books. This position is the usual one, namely that children should be informed that there are two conflicting views on Origins: some scientists believe in evolution, others in special creation. The arguments on *both* sides should be presented and the children should be *free to choose* between them. That Mr. Watson consistently kept to this basis was pointed out at the Tribunal but ignored.

The County saw that such was the climate of opinion in this whole affair that their only hope of success lay in claiming that *they* were the permissive party and Mr. Watson the obscurantist. The exact opposite is the truth.

We recall a time when a man called John Bunyan suffered unjustly for holding very simple principles of integrity. We can only pray that the grave injustices of Mr. Watson's case will somehow (we can hardly imagine how) be rectified. For those who desire more detail, his address is, 9 Pinetree Close, Chalfont St. Peter, Bucks.

Compromise or Biblical Accommodation?

The first part of this article is much more relevant than the title may suppose. It is probable that the majority of the readers of *Reformation Today* are found in the general denominations like the Southern Baptists. Ernest Reisinger, one of the Banner of Truth trustees, is pastor of a large Southern Baptist Church in Florida. Our agent in Texas, J. W. Baker is also a pastor of a Southern Baptist Church where his expository ministry has been wonderfully used. Larry Spargimino was converted from a devout Catholic background while working on his doctorate in music. He has assisted Mr. Reisinger in two pastorates, one in Pennsylvania and the other in Florida. Brother Spargimino is at present working at Southwestern in Texas which is the largest seminary in the world. Part 1 is preparatory to Part 2 of the article which concerns the delicate and controversial matter of the altar call and which is typeset and ready for the next issue.

Sex-education for those under 11

During April, May 1970 we campaigned in this area against the B.B.C. Television Merry-Go-Round series on sex education for small children. We distributed literature to parents. The matter was debated in a public meeting at the local

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Cover picture: *The bearded gentleman with his tidy coat, neat beard, cap and little book is Samuel Fairclough* (1594-1677)*; can be regarded as a typical Puritan preacher. Kedington where he ministered was seventeen miles from Cambridge. Fairclough was a powerful preacher. One had to get to church very early to get in, people coming from a radius of twenty miles around and many from Cambridge. Kedington itself was transformed through his ministry. Are there any towns in England of which we could say that today? Fairclough studied at Queen's College, Cambridge. He was rector at Kedington from* 1629 *to* 1662 *when he was ejected. He was better known as a preacher than a writer.*

junior school. Despite opposition from the Christians and a well respected local doctor, the opposition was overruled. During September this year the national dailies reported the murder by a 12-year old boy of a four-year old girl which was the direct result of premature sex education. A storm has resulted and the battle resumed in some areas.

Price of the magazine

A letter from our accountant advises that it is necessary to raise the subscription price to £2.00. This will come into effect as from next January. We are very grateful for the support provided from generous readers by which we have been sustained in the work and able to stave off the increase up to this time.

A. W. Pink, Part 4

When the typed copy came back from one of the proof readers it had some pretty tough comments concerning Mr. Pink's eccentricities! One such remark read, 'Sheer Exclusive Brethrenism!' It was in the margin where A.W.P. confesses that he never met anybody or read a newspaper. Equally cryptic observations appeared alongside the paragraph where A.W.P. rejoiced in his happiness to be absent from corporate worship. What a poor example that was! Can we say anything in defence? Nothing, except to note that the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable. It was gracious that the Lord permitted Mr. Pink's gifts to be used in spite of his neglect of duty. There is still a widespread resistance among individual believers against any form of church discipline. Some individuals do not want to be obligated or tied down in any way. They want to be absolutely free to please themselves. For this reason, the concept of eldership is sometimes derided, or downgraded. As suggested in a previous editorial, providing we note his faults and avoid them, we can benefit much from Mr. Pink's many writings.

How fast can the thinking of the world change?

When Alexander Solzhenitsyn produced his monumental volumes *Gulag Archipelago* they were destined to have a powerful effect on the world. The author was right when he claimed that if the Russian people would know the details of the annihilation of twenty million people it would be the end of Communism in Russia. Hedrick Smith in his Pulitzer prizewinning international best selling exposé of the Russian way of life (*The Russians*, 639 pp. *Sphere*) shows that the average young Russian does not know the facts, certainly not in their stark reality.

The influence of Solzhenitsyn can be seen in the thinking of France's new thinking. Radical young philosophers Andre Glucksmann (40), Bernard Henri Levy (28) and Jean Marie Benoist (35) have been making a great impression. They have been shaken by Alexander Solzhenitsyn's books and personality in presenting the horrors of the Soviet concentration camps. The young thinkers are gaining a reputation not only in their rejection of Marxism but Capitalism of all varieties Levy says that nobody can institutionalise happiness. Marxism he declares to be the opium of the people. Glucksmann speaks right out against the Stalins of this world, Benoist points out that the peoples are reacting against the oppression of big, confining structures. These men are implacably opposed to all forms of political ideology especially Marxism. The Soviets and Mao are fallen stars for them.

Would it not be wonderful if clear-headed Christian thinkers could gain the attention of the public like these young thinkers? They have discovered very little in comparison with the glories we have discovered in the Gospel. Perhaps we articulate things in an inhibited way.

Adoption a shared experience

The Believers Experience, a book of about 172 pages, plus illustrations, should be available soon now. There are seventeen chapters. Some of these deal very much with the present scene. One chapter has the title, 'How can we explain the success of the Charismatic Movement?' This is followed by a chapter which is divided into three parts, 'The blessings, main problem, and dangers of the Charismatic experience'. Six of the seventeen chapters have appeared in *Reformation Today* but some of these have been improved. The study on the love of God the Father which appeared in the magazine has been completely rewritten and the former effort cast aside as most inadequate by comparison.
The chapter is called 'The experience of love in adoption' and is presented in four parts as follows:

1. Adoption is the ultimate experience
2. Adoption is an experience into which Christ brings us
3. Adoption represents the full experience of the Father's love
4. Adoption is a church or shared experience.

It is the fourth which is reproduced here.

ADOPTION IS A CHURCH OR SHARED EXPERIENCE

The deep concern of our Lord for his family and the way in which they should live together in harmony is expressed sublimely in his high priestly prayer. He prays for the unity of the entire family of believers (John 17:20-26). So impressive is this unity to be that it is to become a foremost factor in evangelism. He prays that we all might be one that the world might believe that he is the sent One. Not only so, but through the beautiful unity of the Church, the outside world is to come into a knowledge of such deep truth as understanding that the believers are loved by God and that Christ is the beloved of the Father (John 17:23).

How, we ask, can such exalted desires find fulfilment in practice? How can a hostile world ever come to see that this strange, religious, isolated group of people called Christians, has a quality of life and a family unity which is of such a standard that it proves the Gospel to be true, and that the Christ is God's sent salvation to the world? In our contemporary world we find that there is very little meaningful contact between believers and unbelievers. It is true that such are thrown together in situations of secular employment, but apart from that there seems to be very little opportunity for the outside

world to see the life of spiritual churches. We are reminded by way of illustration of the viewing platforms provided for the public by building contractors in action as they erect office blocks in our cities. People are often fascinated as they stand and watch the preparation of foundations, the setting of steel reinforcing and the pouring of innumerable tons of concrete. From these viewing platforms the public can watch the activity of the builders and follow progress for themselves.

The Christian churches need to provide viewing platforms. This can be done by way of hospitality in the homes and by organising occasions when outsiders can be invited to social functions such as dinner parties where they can meet and get to know the Christians. Our Lord accepted invitations to dinner parties, even from those critical of him such as Simon the Pharisee. There is nothing wrong in dinner parties!

What has all this to do with spiritual experience? My answer is that this has a great deal to do with experience. As Christians, we do live together as a spiritual family and we share together the responsibility to maintain the immensely high standard of unity prayed for by Christ, and explained by, and insisted upon by Paul (Eph. 4:1-6). We share together as part of our spiritual experience the joys and disappointments involved in the growth of the local church. I do not believe our Lord was talking about praying for a formal kind of organized unity established by ecclesiastical dignitaries who confer in the World Council of Churches. The unity prayed for is not one established by speeches and piles of irrelevant papers but one that is seen by our neighbours. True unity belongs to the sphere of constant personal contact in any society. It is not the letter writing I may have with members of the Christian family in other parts of the country or abroad, edifying though that may be. The only unity my neighbours see is that exemplified by Christians living visibly before them in the area and in the community. It is not the ecclesiastical fancy dress parades they may see on television. What personal contact has a viewer with some mitred, brightly decorated archbishop hundreds or thousands of miles away?

When unbelieving people in any given locality begin to see the life of the church in action and start to respond, this becomes a family event. The body becomes very much alive to the possibility of further members being born into it. The situation is similar to pregnancy and birth in family life. Is that not very much an experience for everyone involved in the intimate family? Of course it is!

While we have the idea of a family in mind, reference can be made to the fundamental priority of family unity. Divorce of husband and wife is a tragedy for both which also has disastrous consequences for the children. There are adverse and discouraging effects for all the other relatives as well. The local church is a family in which discipline must be maintained. As problems and difficulties of all kinds are faced and overcome the family is knitted more closely together. The bond of unity, the mutual love and concern increase as the years go by. The spiritual births in a church, the growing pains and crises passed through—all these make up experience which according to Malachi the prophet will never be forgotten (Mal. 3:16). The translation of church members to be with Christ affects the family very much indeed, whether it be young Stephens at the height of their usefulness or Dorcases of more advanced years.

The adoption of individuals into God's family can be considered on a 'one by one' basis. It is however a major mistake to stop there. This truth has to do with the family. If we separate the doctrine of salvation from the doctrine of the church we can end up as theorists who can talk about knowing God as a science but who lack the reality of spiritual experience as it is related to the church family. Those who neglect the practical issues of church membership and submitting to church oversight and correction (Heb. 13: 17) are denying the practical outworking of the experience of adoption. The very word 'church' (1 Cor. 1:1,2) reminds us that adoption is a relationship which we are called into and which we share together (1 John 3:1,2). We experience adoption here on earth *together*, before we experience it *together* in the next life. Moreover correction and chastisement form a fundamental and essential part of adoption (Heb. 12:5,6).

The rule of life in our experience together of the Father's adoption is *love*. The new commandment is a commandment of love, to love one another with the same quality of love that Christ loves us (John 13:34). This exalted rule is reinforced by the New Testament letters. Peter insists that *above all* we love one another with a pure heart fervently (1 Pet. 4:8). Paul uses well known analogies to illustrate the bond of union and love and care that must exist. As the human body consists of a variety of members joined indissolubly into one harmony, likewise members of the church are united together. As a building is made up of stones cemented together so are members of Christ's church cemented into the closest spiritual relationships in a church (1 Cor. 12:12-27, Eph. 2:21,22).

John declares that when believers love one another it is a sure sign that they have passed from death to life. This love is not love at a distance but love exercised under strains and trials. That is what family love is all about. When individual members in trials and difficulties can rely on the affection and practical support of the other members then that is love indeed.

Differences of colour, class, race, upbringing, background, culture, Christian teaching, temperament, personality, aggravations because of ambition or aggressiveness, aggravations caused by the annoying habits or foibles of others, differences of income and standard of living, clashes of political opinion—resentments or 'hang-ups' about maltreatment or lack of appreciation in the past—any of these, or a combination of them, can disrupt unity and cause division in a church. Unity and love that results from being *all* one in Christ must be a very potent and pervasive spiritual experience if so many problems and differences are going to be overcome and kept in proper perspective.

New Testament teaching on the binding nature of church membership is a reminder of the responsibility that every believer bears in maintaining the unity of the family into which he has been adopted. Added to this some of the most powerful exhortations of the New Testament relate to this matter. This is readily understandable when we remember the necessity of unity. Not only is disunity a travesty of the experience of adoption which we share together but disunity effectively destroys the witness and evangelism of a church. A house divided against itself cannot stand! People of a town or village will conclude that Christianity is worthless if they see believers wrangling and squabbling among themselves. If the townsfolk attend the worship service of the church and see expressions of division which they might expect to find at a political rally, they are likely to conclude that the religion of these people is sham and humbug. They teach that they are all one brothers and sisters in one united family yet fight and squabble like all the rest! We can understand then why the New Testament takes such a firm line against those who cause division (Rom. 16:17). Also we can appreciate why pleas for unity are so earnest. 'Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ, God forgave you' (Eph. 4:32, NIV).

The pre-eminent brother in the family has taught us in his model prayer that we can only expect forgiveness from our Father who has adopted us, as we forgive fellow members of the same family (Matt.

5:12). Paul puts it another way when he says, 'Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with one another and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity' (Col. 3:12-14, NIV).

Adoption is discovered in its full bloom in our experience as we share its outworking in the local church family and as we look forward to its consummation in the next world. That world will be a world of love and of knowing God. In view of these facts we should strive for Christian love to abound in the churches to which we belong, as well as in any other Christian associations that we may sustain. This family love contributes enormously to the life, vigour, effectiveness and growth of a church. We can well understand the assertion of John Owen when he says, 'A church full of love, is a church well built up. I had rather see a church filled with love a thousand times, than filled with the best, the highest, and most glorious gifts and parts that any men in this world may be partakers of.'

Money, organisation, activity, talent, testimonies, sermons and special efforts are all rendered futile when the testimony of a church is destroyed by strife within. But when genuine love prevails the potential and possibilities are unbounded. Our Lord said, 'By *this* shall all men know that you are my disciples, if ye have love one to another' (John 13:35).

In conclusion may I ask you some personal questions? Have you been adopted into this family of love? If so what has your contribution been toward family unity? How rich is your own experience of adoption in your daily walk as a family member? How warm is your appreciation of the experience of other brothers and sisters in the family? And finally, are you going to contribute more to the Christian family because you have read this exposition?

ELECTION AND EVANGELISM (*continued from page 17*)

5. Election (divine sovereignty) and evangelism (or human responsibility) are not enemies but friends. These two truths are often found side by side in the Scripture without a hint of embarrassment or attempt to water down one at the expense of the other (e.g., Matt. 11:25-30; John 6:5-65; Acts 2:23-40; Acts 5:30-32; Acts 13:38,39; Acts 13:46-49; Acts 18:7-11; Rom. 9 and Rom. 10) Election when rightly understood does not discourage but is actually a spur to evangelism.

The Westminster Conference 1977 and 1978

The Conference which used to be called the Puritan Conference is chaired by Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones and takes place at Westminster Chapel in December. This year it is scheduled for 13th and 14th December. The material provided is scholarly and designed to meet the needs of ministers who believe in the value of a comprehensive and detailed knowledge of church history. Naturally, depending on the relevance of the subjects handled, a number of university and seminary students are drawn to this conference. The standard fee whether one session is attended or all six is £2.00. This year stricter measures will be taken to ensure that the fee is paid especially at the last session which is usually overcrowded for the Chairman's final address. The charge acts as a reminder that this is essentially a two day conference and also that expenses such as the printing of the papers have to be met.

This year the theme at Westminster will be 'Anglican and Puritan thinking'. The programme is scheduled like this:

1. **Authority—Hywel Jones**
2. **The Church—Paul Cook**
3. **Episcopacy—Maurice Roberts**
4. **The externals of worship—Robert Oliver**
5. **Worship in liturgy and form—Leslie Rawlinson**
6. **Preaching—The chairman**

The printed papers represent the fruits of much research and for this reason are esteemed by scholars and carefully preserved as part of their reference libraries. Last year, being the American bicentenary, the theme was devoted to 'The Puritan Experiment in the New World'. Stephen Brachlow explored John Robinson's separatist ideals which typified the attitude carried to New Plymouth by the pilgrim separatists in 1620. The fascinating subject of preparationism was opened up by Robert Horn. He based his study on Thomas Hooker's thesis 'The Soul's Preparation for Christ'. The subject is introduced well and reads well but innumerable questions are left frustratingly unanswered. It would take a whole conference to answer these satisfactorily. The theology of coming to Christ is most important and one in which many preachers are weak and need help.

Despite the efforts of the Chairman some of the discussion sessions at the conference sometimes fall below the standard of the papers. One speaker took so long to get to the end of his address on the halfway covenant that there was no time for discussion. There were some present who would have gladly ducked their tormentor in the Serpentine, and jumped in themselves to recover physically from the ordeal, there being a limit to how much concentrated lecturing the human frame can absorb! The zealous speaker has been forgiven by now. His material looks excellent in print, all 28 pages of it, including 91 footnote references, plus a fully adequate bibliography on the subject.

Some appeared to be incensed by R. T. Kendall's paper. They regarded his claims about Cotton and Calvin as outrageous. Kendall was provocative in his title, 'John Cotton—First English Calvinist,' but was right in his outline showing Cotton's change of views, helpful in exposing the legalistic attitudes of the New England Puritans, and correct in pointing out the differences in doctrine between Calvin and the Puritans, especially on the subject of assurance. It has been erroneously and unjustly assumed by some that because R. T. Kendall has asserted the differences between Calvin and the Puritans that it necessarily follows that he must take an anti-Puritan stance as has been adopted by Barthian scholars and by such writers

(continued on page 16)

Ray Levick continued with the biographical study of A. W. Pink (issue 36) where Alan McKerrell had concluded (issue 11). We saw how the Pinks left Australia for England and how they soon moved on to Kentucky. From there they moved again being involved thereafter with constant moving. This aspect of a type of gipsy life is described further by Mr. Levick and discussed.

The life of A. W. Pink part 4

SINCE WRITING THE LAST ARTICLE ON A. W. PINK I HAVE COME INTO POSsession of twenty-five more letters written by the Pinks. These may shed some light on their strange habit of moving from place to place. I feel more comment should be made on this matter before continuing with the rest of their life story.

As previously mentioned they found the general condition of the churches to be very poor as the following extract shows:

> I only returned last night after spending forty-eight hours with three 'likeminded' preachers. We had a most blessed season together in prayer and over the Word. One of them has turned one hundred and four out of his church the past year for heresy, covetousness, worldliness etc.—they had (in an earlier pastorate) been dragged into the church under high-power evangelism—so called. The Lord has honoured this faithful dealing by opening the eyes of several of these excluded ones to see their lost condition and has truly saved them!

If this was the action needed to purify a local assembly then I can understand why other churches which were not purified in this way were given a wide berth by the Pinks. Some like R. M. McCheyne in days past recoiled so much at the thought of using church discipline that it nearly put them out of the ministry! We can understand Mr. Pink shrinking back from situations which would involve the trauma of extensive and firm discipline.

This did not mean that the Pink's would not search out Christian fellowship. At Morton's Gap Mr. Pink had been prepared to travel a long way to do so:

> On Friday, 18th October, I left for a little village 350 miles away for a small rural Baptist Church. Its pastor had exchanged a number of letters with me during the past four months. He seemed to be an unusually spiritual man and assured me he had been seeking to build up a New Testament church, that there were twenty there who would value my teaching etc. I hoped this church might prove the exception to the rule and be an oasis in the desert for 'love thinketh no evil'. Alas my hope was not realised. The pastor though having a wife and six children has no family worship. The 'church' had not celebrated the Lord's Supper for over four years—the one man in it evidencing any spirituality said to me, 'A few have sufficient natural sense to see it would be a mockery to have it under existing conditions'. I believe the Lord sent me there for that one lone sheep of His. He told me he had remained in the 'church?' with an uneasy conscience and at the loss of all peace and joy but knew no other alternative. I went there for two weeks but concluded on the 8th. Unexpectedly the Lord opened another door where I spoke two afternoons and three nights—

a city 'church' with rather well-to-do people in it. I was asked to address the Women's midweek service and spoke 45 minutes from 1 Peter 3:1-6! I had more liberty but there was much to sadden. I sought mainly to stress Matthew 16:24,25—am earnestly seeking grace to practice it more myself.

The Pinks usually only moved to a place where they felt they could have fellowship with the Lord's people who were in the vicinity. Mr. Pink felt it wrong to start a new church on biblical principles as is being done in many parts of the world today. His reasons for this I have not been able to ascertain. He was certainly adamant in declaring, 'I have NO thought of attempting to "Organise" anything, or "starting something new" '. But he went on in a letter to intimate that it may have been God's will for him to conduct Bible classes 'on the outside' (letter 11th April, 1930).

There are frequent expressions in the studies and letters such as 'the house of God on earth is in ruin' or, 'on the outside'. This could give the impression that the Pinks were against the churches. It needs to be emphasised that the churches of the day did not relish Mr. Pink's type of preaching. He believed in giving the congregation what he felt they needed to hear and not what they wanted to listen to.

Mr. Pink spoke mostly on some aspect of divine sovereignty, the Christian's holy walk before the Lord, or the biblical keeping of the Christian Sabbath. These doctrines were not popular in the evangelical churches of those years. Perhaps this indicates that odd sermons or expositions offer no cure to ailing churches. A settled teaching ministry with an enduring, persevering and wise personal application to the members individually is needed.

Eventually Mr. Pink reached the stage where he declined all invitations from unknown churches, Mission Halls and Bible Conferences because 'it becomes increasingly evident to me that I could only enter the "churches" and help (?) the "sheep" still inside them at the price of *compromise*. I would have to go against deep convictions, *wink* at much in them (choirs etc., etc.) and keep back those messages they most needed' (undated letter from Bates Avenue, Los Angeles about 1930-1931).

Of course he sincerely sought to preach what was laid on his heart whenever he spoke. In Australia on one occasion his first words were, 'I am going to speak tonight on one of the most hated doctrines of the Bible, namely that of God's sovereign election'. This theme may have been much on his mind and disposed him to the subject but since it is hardly likely to have been in the minds of his hearers a wiser approach to gain their sympathy is not hard to conjecture.

One reason for the constant moving and being disappointed with each group of believers was that they tried to persuade Mr. Pink to accept preaching engagements and when he declined constantly they could not understand it. In one letter he mentioned that he was thought queer by friends for not doing so. In due time they were to give up fellowship

with local folk and lead lives of seclusion while concentrating on the written ministry.

This move to seclusion was gradual and started on the return to the U.S.A. from England:

> We have less contact with people here in M. Gap than we had in Seaton. The common report is that much study has turned me mad. We neither of us ever go anywhere save to the post office and shops. Have not seen a newspaper for nearly a year so are quite ignorant of what is going on in the world. [From an article in the studies on 'radios' (November 1930) they were against them in the home. One wonders what they would have felt about the modern television.] But the LORD is with us and that is all that matters. He continues to supply our every need. Haven't had a moment's anxiety about anything for a long, long while. So you see we are highly favoured. Preserved in splendid health. I would not mention these things but I know you are deeply interested in our welfare and because I hope you will turn them into *thanksgiving* to our faithful God (letter, 9th March, 1930).

How did they adjust to this? Their main concern was to be in the Lord's will for their lives. All letters referred to in these articles were written to Horace Coleman and his wife who were a generation older than the Pinks. Mr. Coleman must have expressed fatherly concern at Mr. Pink not being used in a preaching ministry. In this extract to the Colemans we have another rare insight into their life:

> Do not in anywise be worried over our experiences and lot. We are not. By divine grace we are *quite* content, never happier in our souls, never more conscious of the Lord's presence, never more frequently favoured with manifestations (John 14:2) thereof. Were I doing more preaching it would be simply impossible to reply as I ought to the letters which are coming in daily. It's indeed surprising (humanly speaking) the number of souls God is bringing us into direct touch with who, like ourselves, are virtually cut off from all visible fellowship with God's people, who never *hear* any of God's servants minister His Word. Some of them are greatly perplexed, some deeply distressed, some sorely tempted to compromise. It is a deep and holy privilege to minister to such by the pen. Away from the 'madding crowd' relieved of oral duties, quietly dwelling alone with the Lord, it is much easier to ascertain His mind and word for each individual case (no two are alike) as they are presented in correspondence. We have *no* 'plans'; our 'times' are in HIS hands; but for the immediate present it would be positively sinful for us to doubt for a moment but what we are in His will, in the place of His appointing, engaged in the work of His assigning. He is abundantly supplying our every need, freeing us entirely from any worry about finances, so that we may give ourselves unreseverdly and unperturbedly to spiritual things. Perhaps the tone of this sounds rather boastful but I am writing you freely, that you may know just how the Lord is dealing with us and to remove the uneasiness from your minds. I am very, very far from being a disappointed, disheartened, sad man, because the Lord has seen fit to change the sphere of my service for Him from a public to a private one; rather am I deeply thankful. However I am thoroughly convinced that there will be more real 'fruit' for HIM. His ways are ever different from man's! Whatever the real needs of greater Sydney may be, as God sees them, He can and will minister to them (letter dated 11th December, 1929).

In my opinion most of the best writings in the Studies were produced during the latter period of his life whilst he was in seclusion.

As we have seen so far the Pinks had moved to Los Angeles from Morton's Gap. Whilst in Los Angeles they first stayed with the Richards family whom they had previously lived with in Seattle nine years beforehand. Within a short time they moved to adequate accommodation at Bates Avenue which was closer to the city. It was here that Mr. Pink received 'the glad tidings of the home-going of my dear mother—turned 80, now "forever with the Lord" ' (letter, 13th June, 1930).

The Pinks usually kept to themselves and were a complete mystery (based on Pink's own words) to their neighbours who did not know the source of their income. The correspondence side was growing to the extent of forty to fifty letters per week being written by them.

During 1931 they felt the need to move again:

> Since last writing you, the Lord has wrought most graciously for us. When we left Los Angeles at the end of March, we knew that the State of Pennsylvania was where He would next have us reside, but in which part of it we knew not. We stopped first at Al Penn and remained for a week in the home of our Christian friends the Hunters. God granted most refreshing times together, and I believe he deigned to use us in encouraging them continuing to 'fight the good fight of faith, lay hold of (get a better grip upon!!) eternal life'. From there we went on to Yourk, Penn, to the home of our Christian friends the Pressels—who acted for the interests of 'Studies' the years we were absent from the U.S.A. There we remained for eight weeks waiting on our Master to ascertain where HE would have us locate, in the meantime giving two or three Bible readings each week to a handful of 'His own' all upon Hebrews 11! Nor did God fail us: He made His will unmistakably plain and provided for us a peaceable habitation, right out in the country, where we can pray, study and write without disturbance. The only sounds we hear is the singing of the birds and an occasional car driving by. We have planted out a small garden, so this, together with walking a mile each way for our milk in the early evening, gives us all the exercise we need. We are only one mile from Swengel, where my publisher lives and with whom we have happy fellowship. Our friends the Hunters and the Pressels both own cars and have already spent two week-ends with us and the Herendeens—17 of us in all. We have had some precious seasons together before the Throne and around the Word. The cost of living here is very cheap, so not much is required for us to 'pay our way'. Occasionally (DV) we shall go to A York and Philadelphia for little meetings.

This was an unpainted wooden house at Millmont where they stayed until 1933 before moving to York which was 100 miles away. On this occasion they had heard they were likely to receive notice to quit from their landlord.

The background of this period was that of a worldwide depression. The religious atmosphere was also one of depression. During 1931 two 'Sound the Alarm' articles appeared in the Studies followed by another in 1932.

A key verse for the Pinks was 'having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof; from such turn away' (2 Tim. 3:5). To the Pinks this verse was clear advise to those still belonging to the usual churches (clubs!). It was 'simply impossible to be there and preserve spirituality' (letter, 21st July, 1932). In this same letter he rejoiced that the four years since

leaving Australia (and corporate worship) had been the happiest of his life.

As usual Mr. Pink was very careful to point out the difference between an imperfect church and a hypocritical and counterfeit one when sounding his alarms.

They were, however, not altogether negative in outlook as Mr. Pink felt that the only hope for the church was a spiritual revival. Although a few comments appeared in his letters, I have been unable to find any references in the Studies to date. Perhaps he felt that faithfully to expound the Scriptures was the best method of honouring the Holy Spirit!

In the middle of 1931 he was able to write:

> Personally I have more hopes now for a genuine revival among God's people than I have had for twenty years past!! Present conditions were needed (and are so still—probably yet worse) to bring them in earnest to their knees. Don't be occupied with the iniquitous government, rather ask why has God seen fit to inflict His own naughty people with such! 'The curse causeless shall not come' (somewhere in the Bible!). When did God stir up the Philistines against Israel? When did He make the Midianites as thorns in their sides? When was it and for what reason did He send the Assyrians to carry them captive into Babylon? Ah, my friends, don't seek to throw the blame upon the godless masses. The Lord pays but little attention to *them*. *One* Jonah caused a whole ship's company and crew to suffer! Present industrial and government conditions are due to the fleshliness and worldliness of Christians! When *they* REPENT AND TURN FROM their sinful ways, earthly conditions and situations will speedily change for the better! Meanwhile let us judge ourselves unsparingly and cry day and night unto God to revive His work in the hearts of His own (letter, 11th July, 1931).

As his views on this subject are not well known I will quote from another letter written in 1932:

> I believe brighter days are ahead for the Lord's people. I look for a genuine and widespread revival, tho I believe the present distress must continue another year or two before there is a real heeding of 1 Peter 5:6. The Enemy has 'come in like a flood' and God has promised that His Spirit shall 'raise up a standard against him'. At eveningtime it SHALL BE LIGHT. Psalm 107 holds out much hope. Above all Jehovah is on the throne and His arm is not shortened. O that He might find us vessels 'meet for the Master's use' when His hour to lay bare His arm arrives.

In January 1933 the first of a series of eighteen articles appeared on the subject of dispensationalism, a system of interpreting prophecy that many of his readers would have followed.

In the section on the 'Law of God' he tells us that 'in his youth the writer was taught by men he looked up to, that law and grace could no more be united than oil and water: may the Lord forgive him for inserting this error in some of his early writings' (S.S. April 1934). In another section he confessed that he was considerably influenced by men who loudly insisted that in the Scriptures 'Jew' meant 'Jew' and not a Christian, that 'Israel' meant 'Israel' and not the Church (S.S. September 1933).

I am not sure when he changed his viewpoint on prophecy but at least a year earlier brief references against this teaching started to appear in the studies. The articles were hard hitting and within a few years the magazine circulation was to fall so much that it was in danger of ceasing to be published. This series on dispensationalism may have been one of the prime reasons as a fair proportion of his readers were Open Brethren. The articles have never been reprinted. I fear that sales of his other writings would fall in some circles if this happened.

This series were of his more solid type of exposition, so much so that in the June 1933 issue Mr. Pink took the unusual step of summarising the three previous articles (for the benefit of the average reader!).

Rather than give my own views on the subject I feel I can do no better than let the author give his own summary with which he concluded the series:

> Our unwelcome task (for the present, at any rate) is completed. From what has been before us in these papers we now draw up the following bill of indictment against the 'Dispensationalists'.
>
> 1. Their starting-point is wrong: they begin at the Garden of Eden, instead of going back to the Everlasting Covenant.
> 2. They rob God's children of many of their Father's precious promises.
> 3. They force into 2 Timothy 2:15 a meaning which its context in nowise warrants.
> 4. They are all at sea concerning the mystical Body of Christ, failing to see that the Church of God is commensurate with the entire Election of Grace.
> 5. They introduce the utmost confusion into the study of Prophecy, by ignoring the fundamental distinction between carnal or national Israel and the spiritual 'Israel of God'.
> 6. They ignore the grace of God in O.T. times, and teach the monstrous error that under the Mosaic economy sinners were saved by their own doings.
> 7. They repudiate the moral Law of God as a rule of life for the Christian today.
> 8. They invidiously seek to pit Scripture against Scripture, instead of showing their perfect unity and lovely harmony.
> 9. They split up the one predestinated, adopted, redeemed, and regenerated Family of God into various groups and cliques, many of them going so far as to insist that the father of the faithful will have no part in the inheritance of many of His children.
> 10. They are woefully ignorant of the vast difference there is between the commands and precepts of God which are special and peculiar and those which are general and universal, between those which are evanescent and those which are perpetual, between ceremonial and moral duties. Thus they are perverters of God's Truth, enemies of the Faith, and their preachings and writings should be shunned by all who desire the *pure* milk of the Word.

From now on this change of view was noticed in other articles as well. Arthur Pink's writings have been widely distributed and books by him continue to multiply from the presses which makes these background issues to be all the more relevant and important. Perhaps we will be able to continue with a study of A.W.P.'s life and times in a later issue of *Reformation Today*.

Correspondence

Dear Erroll,

Thank you for your review of the two new hymn books. It was my conviction that in our own congregation *Christian Hymns* would greatly enrich our worship and give us an eighty per cent increase in choice over *The Baptist Hymn Book*. I found so many of the hymns in the latter unsuitable, often for doctrinal reasons and also because of the unattractive tunes. I find all the hymns contained in the new *Christian Hymns* perfectly usable and can relax as far as doctrinal content is concerned because I find myself in sympathy with the compilers.

The singing has improved delightfully in a short time. A wise selection of hymns suitable for the young, plus about eighty paraphrased psalms has added to the stimulus given us through this timely change in which we all rejoice.

We much enjoyed the Family Conference at Pilgrim Hall. The paper given by Drew Garner on how to profit from Bible reading would make a good basis for further development in a number of studies. The 'family reformation' element has, I think, been adequately covered for a while.

Sincerely yours in his service,

Brian Freer.

Dear Erroll,

May I applaud some of the sentiments recently expressed in *Reformation Today* re: evangelicals in the C of E and the BU. Your plea to reach into their situation with sympathy rather than standing aloof in condemnation is a welcome one. The concern to give all the support we can to those who have not yet felt compelled to secede but are fighting hard for the truth, is one which we shall endorse.

Your comment about the last sterile decade is a timely one for the net result seems to be a yawning gulf between those who in fact are at one in the Gospel. On the one hand there are those who are in the 'doctrinally mixed' denomination, and on the other those who have either seceded, or were already in denominations or local churches which have remained faithful to the Gospel.

But we should surely face the fact that many of these men in the C of E and the BU are with us in the fundamentals of the Gospel. Indeed someone like Jim Packer belongs essentially to the reformed constituency, and he is not alone in this for there are others in the C of E, which I know best, but doubtless also in the BU, which I do not know so well, who maintain the doctrines of grace.

But can we read Jim Packer on particular redemption, and feel thankful that he has made John Owen much plainer, and safeguarded the truth against a lot of what is being taught today, and then ostracise him as if he were a Judaiser? Are we to delight in Bishop Ryle's writings and forget that he argued in a similar way to Jim Packer, worked with those who were not evangelicals and justified remaining in a comprehensive C of E? But have not many evangelicals in the C of E like Jim Packer betrayed the cause by their present silence or by their endorsement of the new approach to ecumenism? Agreed, and I deplore it! But a couple of points need to be made. If men are cut off from fellowship then the restraints which might act as a check are removed and they may go much further in the wrong direction. Furthermore if the way in which they are excluded is lacking in Christian grace, then when truth presents a very harsh face it is not perhaps surprising—for we are, after all, flesh and blood—if a gracious approach from error easily misleads.

Then again where does this guilt by association end? Are we to say that we must pull out of every association where Anglicans are involved? Must we tell our young people in the Universities that they must boycott the CU's if there is any Anglican speaker? Must we end up in

the sterility of American fundamentalism with a brandished fist as our trademark, or in the barren and negative bitterness which in Ulster goes as a stand for the truth?

Does this mean we are going soft on the importance of truth? Far from it! We reject the present policy of Anglican evangelicals. But because we love them in the Lord we must maintain fellowship. After all they are much more likely to listen to our rebukes if we are still within earshot. At the moment the occasional shout of defiance from the trenches is scarcely even heard across the wide expanse of no-man's-land—except by the odd patrol who run the risk of being caught in the cross fire from both sides.

It may seem paradoxical that reformed Baptists who are pilloried in some non-conformist quarters for their distinctive emphases, which it is claimed are a hindrance to evangelical unity, do in fact take that unity seriously. But we cannot shut our eyes to our brethren who are we feel on a wrong path. We cannot write them off. We will think through and preach the truth as we see it. But we will also see our own sinful failures—our lack of evangelistic zeal where some Anglicans are ablaze, our lack of missionary concern when others are spending themselves at the ends of the earth. We may also do a little reflecting on history. Our Puritan forebears seceded in 1662 for conscience sake and we thank God for their courage. But we remember that within a couple of generations their grandchildren were in the apostasy of unitarianism, and revival fires were lit by God both in Baptist Churches which remained true to the faith, and also in the very mixed and degenerate Church of England. We need to be careful lest we quench the Spirit by refusing to allow the possibility of His working according to His sovereign will. We need to be equally careful lest in our love for our brethren we mute our reproof. We must withstand their compromise but let it be with the maintenance of a warm fellowship in the gospel.

Yours sincerely for both
truth and unity,

Herbert Carson.

THE WESTMINSTER CONFERENCE (*continued from page 8*)

as Holmes Rolston III. Dr. Kendall is strongly anti-Barthian and does not take the stance taken by the Barthian scholars regarding the Puritans. He does assert, however, that we need to assess the Puritans much more critically than we do, which is precisely what he did in his paper, and on a former occasion when in 1974 he spoke on the subject of William Perkins. Those papers are now out of print (Carey Publications have seven copies left in stock!).

The conference report is 120 pages, paperback, and retails at 95p. It is distributed by the Evangelical Press and can therefore be ordered from your local bookshop. Besides the material described above there is a valuable contribution on Roger Williams—the pioneer Baptist who was the earliest legislator for a full and absolute liberty of conscience. Also Dr. Lloyd-Jones says much that needs to be said and heeded by us all on the subject of Jonathan Edwards and the crucial importance of revival.

If you wish to attend this year's conference write as soon as possible for a brochure which gives full details as well as information about past papers which can be obtained from:

Rev. David Bugden,
75 High Street,
Warboys,
Huntingdon,
Cambs. PE17 2TA.

Election and Evangelism

by Wayne Mack

ONE IDEA THAT IS QUITE COMMON AMONG SOME CHRISTIANS CONCERNING the doctrine of election is that it is a hindrance to evangelism. I was in a seminary class where the professor laboured the point that those who believe in election have great tension when it comes to the matter of evangelism. Often people have asked me, 'If you believe that God has chosen men unto salvation, why do you bother witnessing or sending out missionaries? After all, if they are going to be saved, they are going to be saved'.

When a sincere person confronts me with this question I answer them in the following way:

1. The truth of any doctrine is not to be determined on pragmatic grounds but on the basis of whether or not Scripture teaches it. The issue then is—does the Bible teach the doctrine of election? (Isa. 8:20; 2 Tim. 3: 16,17).

2. Many of the greatest preacher-evangelists of church history believed the doctrine of election (e.g., John Bunyan, George Whitefield, Jonathan Edwards, Charles Spurgeon, George Mueller, John Paton, William Burns, etc.). Their conviction concerning election did not stifle their evangelistic zeal and fervour.

3. Election is not to be equated with salvation. Election, as Paul says in 2 Thessalonians 2:13, 'is unto salvation'. Election is the great architect deciding what will happen in the area of salvation. Salvation is the outworking of God's plans—the actual construction of the super-structure. Election does not make the actual construction of the building unnecessary. Rather, it secures the full construction. To equate election with salvation is to think that the blue print is the building.

4. Election does not negate the importance of prayer, preaching, repentance, faith and other human efforts. Rather, it includes them. God not only chooses the method by which he will save and the men whom he will save but also the means by which men will be saved. 2 Thessalonians 2:13 asserts that God chooses unto salvation by or through (not without or apart from) 'the sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth'. Therefore, if a man does not know or believe the truth, he will not be saved. (Many other passages also teach the same truth, e.g. Rom. 10: 9-17; Eph. 1:13; Acts 13:48; John 3:18,36; Luke 13:3,5; Acts 17:30,31; 1 Cor. 1:18,20,23; Jas. 1:18; John 6:35,37.)

(continued on page 7)

The importance of a positive outlook

HAVING BEEN DELIVERED MARVELLOUSLY FROM THE LAND OF EGYPT THE children of Israel soon forgot what God had done. When confronted with the task of invading the land of Canaan they drew back in unbelief. They allowed their minds to be filled with negative arguments about the size of giants of Anak and the height of the walls of fortified cities. This lack of faith provoked God to anger.

A similar type of negative attitude is common in Britain today. Forgetting the glories of past achievements a negative attitude, stultifying and unattractive in the extreme has invaded the land. Instead of saying, Let us tackle the task together and see what we can do, there is a drawing back into the wilderness of attempting nothing and just dragging on in the same old way. From where does this malaise spring? In some cases it has to do with temperament or illness or past discouragements but in many cases this depressing outlook is derived from the national disease which has been commented upon recently by William Rees Mogg, editor of *The Times.*

In a second article on productivity Mr. Rees Mogg advocates the dismantling of the machinery for wasting manpower. He hits out against crippling restrictive labour practices which significantly reduce production. He appeals for the trade unions to perform their real job of increasing productivity and hence increasing employment prospects and higher wages. Unlike *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Times* has opened its columns to forthright contributions from both ends of the political spectrum. Nobody could construe Mr. Rees Mogg's article as political. His very plea is a plea for the survival of Britain and the trade unions. He argues that 'a parade ground army which cannot fight is a doomed army; a trade union movement which actually reduces the real standard of living of its members is a doomed trade union movement!' He is arguing not for demolition but reformation.

The mentality that the government is here to support and feed us whether we work or not has spread like a cancer right across the land. One of the families that reads this magazine recently took in an unmarried mother and at no small cost in time and effort saw her through her trials and problems. The greatest single issue and battle with this person was to get her to see the unrighteousness of living the whole of her life off the backs of others and also persuading her that the government does not exist merely to feed untold multitudes of idle, lazy people.

I confess that I do not know which way to vote at the next election. I admire Chancellor Healey's performance. He has shown admirable

patience and has held out against excessive wage demands. I think Mr. Callaghan has shown a great sense of responsibility in many ways and especially in resisting excessive wage claims. What I am urging then has nothing to do with the political parties. What I am saying is that it is appalling when Christians who are supposed to have great faith in God show the exact opposite in their attitudes.

To return to the article by William Rees Mogg (5th October, 1977) he outlines seven sobering points concerning Britain's performance.

SEVEN POINTS ON PRODUCTIVITY

- A Japanese steelworker produces five and a half tons for every ton produced by a British steelworker.
- An employee of Pan Am handles three times the traffic of an employee of British Airways.
- Britain's share of the world tonnage in shipbuilding has fallen from 38 per cent in 1950 to 4 per cent in 1976.
- In 1973 British Leyland produced 5.9 vehicles per man. Renault produced 14.6, though the average value of British Leyland vehicles was probably greater.
- Dutch productivity in manufacturing is twice British and has been rising two and a half times as fast.
- In 36 productivity comparisons of industrial groups with E.E.C. countries Britain comes bottom in 34.
- Studies show that "the problem of the low level of productivity in the United Kingdom is not one of structure but purely one of poor performance".

We should not allow these selected facts to discourage us. In several fields Britain leads the world which shows that the quality is present, where there is the zeal to produce it.

From time to time when I have contrasted Britain with America and asked why the average evangelical in America shows far more faith and enterprise than his equivalent here, some have tended to be angry with me, pointing out that America is a rich nation that can afford to be generous. I insist however that I have met many Christians in America who are not rich but who still have the general characteristic of being positive and generous in their whole approach to the Lord's work. In fact when you come to think of it a minority of poor people here, mostly elderly people on very small pension allowances prove my point. Many of them totally

outshine the younger generation. They resemble Joshua and Caleb in their attitude.

One of the speakers at Keswick this year drew attention to some of these issues. Among other challenging statements he said that it is positively sinful for anyone in Britain who has a taxed income *not* to give by covenant to the Lord's work in order to take advantage of the tax reimbursement deliberately held out for us to use. Think of the implications of that! Is this being hard or realistic?

Let us exercise faith in these matters. Let us pray for an attitude which encourages production, enterprise, expansion, hard work and fair reward, justice and generosity. Let us pray for good health of body and mind so as to be able to work. Let us pray for our leaders, our trade unions, our nation. As Christians let us have nothing to do with constant grumbling and grousing and the discouraging and depressing of others. Let us pray that we will be able to make a positive contribution toward the recovery and strength of every sector of our society. As believers let us be the best citizens the country has.

IS THE PURITAN MOVEMENT DEAD-ENDED?

(*continued from page 24*)

But we do get intellectuals in as well. We had a doctor who looked after me and she is a very good doctor and we have other people like engineers'.[4]

Sir Fred is speaking here of his impressions which can possibly be on the optimistic side. Careful surveys however have been made and these reveal that, far from dying, the Kingdom of Christ is very much alive in some Communistic countries, such as Russia where persecution and oppression have been rife.[5]

We freely acknowledge that it is not Puritanism that will fill the earth. Biblical truth is destined to fill the earth as the waters cover the sea. Since Puritanism, as the term is used in a wide and popular sense, is pretty close to biblical truth, we should not be talking so pessimistically about its wreckage. Spurgeon referred in his early days to those who were intent on daubing up the windows of truth and who mocked Puritanism. But the day would come, said Spurgeon, when they would be confounded to see Heaven's light breaking through once more.[6] It has!

NOTES

[1] 77 *Notts Untied*, by Eddie Neale, Michael Smout, Colin Bedford, Dick Williams. Lakeland, pp. 155, £1.25.
[2] Baker Book House, 282 pp.
[3] Carey Publications, £1.50.
[4] Gleaned from the magazine *Dedication*.
[5] *Discretion and Valour* by Trevor Beeson (Fontana, 348 pp.) provides an up-to-date survey of the religious situation in the Communist countries of Europe.
[6] *The Early Years*, p. 11.

Is the Puritan Movement dead-ended?

In a volume called '77 Notts Untied'[1] Michael Smout draws attention to the absence of evangelical Anglican theologians. The National Evangelical Anglican Congress proved to be a very lightweight affair as far as theology was concerned. Their most accomplished theologian was little to the fore. Michael Smout describes J. I. Packer as the 'lost leader sitting uneasily among the wreckage of the dead-ended Puritan movement'.

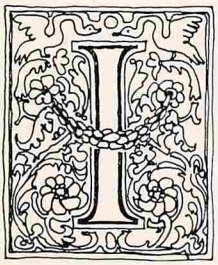
In his letter published in this issue of *Reformation Today* Herbert Carson refers to that huge tract of land dividing Anglican evangelicals from their Nonconformist counterparts. It may be due to my inability to see clearly at such distances that I have not been able to notice that there had ever been a Puritan movement among present day evangelical Anglicans. If a train crashes to become a wreck it was because there was both a train and momentum. There may be isolated Puritans among the evangelical Anglicans but certainly not enough to form a carriage let alone a train.

Perhaps Michael Smout is thinking of the Puritan movement in general. If so we would neither think of it as a wreck or as dead-ended. Nowadays the term Puritan is used in a general sense to describe those who have rediscovered the biblical doctrines and practices of the Puritans and who seek to exemplify these in the reality of today's world. While he did not follow the Puritan practice of preaching systematically through the books of Scripture, C. H. Spurgeon is esteemed a Puritan—one born out of time.

Nobody in our generation seems to be able to match J. I. Packer in the art of advocating and pronouncing with enthusiasm the advantages of learning from the Puritans. Ironically he himself has lacked the advantages of a pastoral charge. The Puritan values become alive in the living situation of the pastorate. Puritanism is a reality in weekly pastoral preaching and care. Many will testify to the wonderful help that has been afforded them through the rediscovery of the values exemplified by the Puritans. The strengths imparted are innumerable.

Dr. Packer wrote a foreword to the Puritan Conference papers when they were first printed for distribution to booksellers during 1959. What he said then of the 1958 Conference he has repeated almost word for word in the foreword of the recently published book, *Introduction to Puritan Theology*.[2] In this volume the word 'Puritan' is employed in its broadest sense. The book includes the writings of archbishop Usher and bishop Jewell. The point of interest however is that Dr. Packer has not moved in his convictions from 1959 to 1977 as to the value of Puritan literature.

What did he say in 1959 that he has repeated today? We will include the modern version and in order to make it stand out will add a little typographical adornment borrowed from Peter Lewis' book *The Genius of Puritanism.*[3]



T DOES NOT SEEM POSSIBLE TO DENY THAT the Puritans (using the word in the broad and inclusive sense) were strongest just where evangelical Christians today are weakest, and their writings can give evangelicals more real help than those of any other body of Christian teachers, past or present, since the days of the apostles. This is a large claim, but there is a solid basis for it. Consider the characteristics of Puritan Christianity.

Here were men of outstanding intellectual power, in whom the mental habits fostered by sober scholarship were linked with a flaming zeal for God and a minute acquaintance with the human heart. All their work reveals this unique fusion of gifts and graces. Their appreciation of God's sovereign majesty was profound; their reverence in handling His Word was deep. They understood the ways of God with men, the glory of Christ the Mediator, and the work of the Spirit in the believer and the church, as richly and fully as any since their day. Nor was their knowledge a mere theoretical orthodoxy. They sought to 'reduce to practice' (their own phrase) all that God taught them. They yoked their consciences to Scripture, disciplining themselves to demand a theological, as distinct from a merely pragmatic, justification for everything they did. They saw the church, the family, the state, the arts and sciences, the world of commerce and industry, along with the personal world and involvements of each individual, as so many spheres in which the Creator and Lord of all things must be served and glorified.

Then, too, knowing God, they also knew man. They saw him as essentially a noble being, made in God's image to rule God's world, but now tragically brutified and brutalised by sin. In the light of God's law, lordship, and holiness, they saw sin in its threefold character: as transgression and guilt; as rebellion and usurpation; and as uncleanness, corruption, and inability for good. Seeing these things and knowing as they did the ways and means whereby the Spirit brings sinners to faith and new life in Christ, and leads saints to grow up into their Saviour's image by growing downwards into humility and an increasing dependence on grace, the Puritans became superb pastors in their own day. By the same token, they can, though dead, yet speak to us for our guidance and direction.

For we evangelicals need help. Where the Puritans called for order, discipline, depth, and thoroughness, our temper is one of casual haphazardness and restless impatience. We crave for stunts, novelties,

entertainments; we have lost our taste for solid study, humble self-examination, disciplined meditation, and unspectacular hard work in our callings and in our prayers. Again, where Puritanism had God and his glory as its unifying centre, our thinking revolves round ourselves as if we were the hub of the universe. The hollowness of our vaunted biblicism becomes apparent as again and again we put asunder things God has joined. Thus, we concern ourselves about the individual but not the church, and about witness but not worship. In evangelising, we preach the gospel without the law and faith without repentance, stressing the gift of salvation and glossing over the cost of discipleship. No wonder so many who profess conversion fall away!

Then, in teaching the Christian life our habit is to depict it as a path of thrilling feelings rather than of working faith, and of supernatural interruptions rather than of rational righteousness; and in dealing with Christian experience we dwell constantly on joy, peace, happiness, satisfaction, and rest of soul with no balancing reference to the divine discontent of Romans 7, the fight of faith of Psalm 73, or any of the burdens of responsibility and providential chastenings that fall to the lot of a child of God. The spontaneous jollity of the carefree extrovert comes to be equated with healthy Christian living, and jolly extroverts in our churches are encouraged to become complacent in carnality, while saintly souls of less sanguine temperament are driven almost crazy because they cannot bubble over in the prescribed manner. Whereupon they consult their pastor, and he perhaps has no better remedy than to refer them to a psychiatrist! Truly, we need help, and the Puritan tradition can give it. ✻

If the values and advantages just cited are lost sight of today then we can well envisage the wreckage of a non-theological train at the end of the line somewhere in a wilderness! There was precious little theological content at NEAC. As Nonconformist enthusiasts we have every intention of learning every thing we can from the Puritans. We see no dead-end and we do not anticipate wreckage.

Let us turn now to another viewpoint, that of Charles D. Alexander. He writes in *The Researcher* (September 1977) under a heading—'The Eclipse of the Puritan Hope'. Typical of his style he uses his bow to play a doleful yet impressive piece on deep bass. For brother Alexander the demise of Western Culture is synonomous with the demise of Christianity. He seems to think that the whole issue of future prosperity is impeded by drug-abuse, Soho, sodomy and the like. The presence of such abominations leads him to think that this is the time of the great and final falling away. The Antichrist is about to appear. Catastrophe is imminent. To talk about the latter day glory therefore is absurd.

While not wishing to minimise the degeneration of Western culture we will do well to keep a sense of proportion. The influence of the humanists

in Britain has been out of all proportion to their real number. The Humanist magazine has a circulation considerably less than *Reformation Today* which is only one of countless journals devoted to the Gospel. We may not be typical but the power of the humanists in this part of the country is quite pathetic. There is one female voice, very voluble, but quite incomprehensible to the average person.

The steady increase of churches throughout the country where an expository ministry can be recommended seems to have missed the attention of Mr. Alexander. He also seems to be out of touch with the universities where the percentage of evangelical students is very encouraging indeed.

Not for one moment would we suggest that we are on the threshhold of the millennium. (Any views we hold of that rest on Scripture alone and not on impressions received from the mass media.) Let us maintain a balanced outlook. Mr. Alexander at one time expressed great horror that a certain professor at a ministers' conference should apparently have been addicted to that most obnoxious weed called tobacco! As far as we know the good professor did not quit the dreadful habit! With gratitude we observe too that Christianity has not collapsed as a consequence!

Furthermore we must avoid the notion that the future of the Gospel depends solely on its Western/English speaking constituency. Countries like South Korea have enjoyed a tremendous Gospel prosperity which, it would seem, outstrips us completely. And what about nations in the Communist bloc? Did not Christianity in its first expression thrive when everything was pitted against it? Did not the early Christians triumph in spite of all the Sohos referred to in Romans one, and in spite of the wrath of the Caesars? Fred Catherwood has expressed his views about the Gospel in Marxist countries. He said recently,

'Of course Christians are particularly worried about Marxism because it happens to be an atheistic creed and therefore we know perfectly well that we couldn't adhere to it and that if there were a Marxist State then we would be in difficulties. However, I think we've got to notice that Christianity is flourishing more strongly probably in Marxist countries now than it is almost anywhere else. Just incidentally, for instance, I talked to a Christian student who had a scholarship to an Eastern European country and I asked him how many people went to his Church and he said 800. So I said 'You mean 800 members?' so he said, 'No, 800 people are there on a Sunday morning.' And this was a provincial town, not a capital. I said, 'Is that a particularly full church?' and he said, 'No, there is another Church where there are 600 and there is a Lutheran Church where there are 200, and of course there are the Catholic Churches as well'. So I said, 'Who goes?' and he said, 'Well, it is said to be, of course, only for the working classes because intellectuals aren't Christians.

(*continued on page 20*)

The living and growing Church

The Eighth Carey Conference, Liverpool, 3rd-5th January, 1978

THE TESTIMONY OF PASTOR BILL EDWARDS (SEE PAGE III) ILLUSTRATES A little of the new dimensions into which the truths of free grace can bring believers. The Carey Conference began as a consequence of the re-discovery of our doctrinal heritage. The concern from the beginning has been with practical application especially in the area of local church practice.

It is alleged and acknowledged by many that the free grace movement is mostly an academic affair and that for the living and growing churches one has to turn elsewhere. The allegation is only partially true. In England we are fully aware that various expressions of hyper-Calvinism (mostly among Baptists) brought free grace truth into almost total demise for many years. Yet the irresistible power of biblical truth is demonstrated in that it has overcome the grossest distortions to which some have subjected it. Not only can truth survive such handicaps but it can spring up and prosper mightily in all directions. Past deviations and subsequent recoveries are recorded as a matter of history.

The annual contribution at the Carey Conference by way of historical perspective and biographical instruction is to be presented by Frank Ellis who will address the conference at Liverpool on the subject of Andrew Fuller.

Andrew Fuller is a key figure in Baptist history. His was a life devoted to the support of missionary work, particularly that of William Carey. His writings, especially *The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation*, contributed toward the recovery of the Gospel from false conclusions which lead to disaster, as well as the investment of that same Gospel with the supreme glory, power, beauty and relevance which belong to it alone. But more of that from pastor Ellis who has himself devoted the major part of his Christian service to missionary effort.

The evenings at the annual Carey Conference for ministers are given to preaching at meetings in a nearby church to which all are invited. The preachers for the evenings are pastors Harry Kilbride, Herbert Carson and Erroll Hulse. It is important that the highest theological standards be maintained. In order to contribute in that way Herbert Carson has agreed to produce a written up-to-date paper on the subject of eternal punishment for distribution at the conference. It is his intention to show the relevance of that subject in his preaching at one of the evening meetings.

The subject, 'The living and growing Church', will probably be handled by Erroll Hulse. What are the elements involved in a living church—one that grows and expands? What are the main hindrances to life and expansion? Pastor Harry Kilbride, formerly minister of the much prospered Free Church at Chessington and now minister at the well known Lansdowne Baptist Church, Bournemouth, will expound along similar

lines. He may decide however to use his freedom to address those present on any other subject thought most relevant at the time.

The first session on Wednesday will be devoted to 'the nurture of the young convert'. Chris Robinson whose church in Dublin is largely made up of those converted from Rome will handle this theme. Doubtless he will make many suggestions as to measures that can be taken to establish converts in the truth. This will be followed by Peter Lewis whose subject will probably cause some tremors and heart searchings. It lays hold of the very spinal column of the Church's life, namely, preaching and worship. The title is, *The reformation of the Reformed*, and subtitle, *A cry for contemporaneity*. Any present who may be in bondage or influenced by unscriptural traditionalisms are likely to be electrified (not electrocuted!) by this address!

Instead of early morning prayer meetings to which those who have been up late the previous night stagger in dutiful but half-alert state, the conference will be 'interlaced' with times of intercession. This does not preclude the freedom to begin early in prayer. But freedom is the rule. For everything there is a time. For many this conference is primarily a time of renewed fellowship, with the papers and preaching added as a bonus.

Scheduled for each day is a discussion time. Some would like the issue of the criteria for ministerial training to be properly introduced and debated. The substance of the other addresses may well demand discussion. Decisions about the use of the discussion periods may easily be reached by a democratic process at the time. On Thursday morning Keith Davies of Tuckingmill Reformed Baptist Church, Cornwall, will address the conference on the subject of church planting and the principles underlying that issue. Pastor Davies will be able to quote from his own practical experience. Uppermost in the minds of many will be such questions as 'how do we get little churches off the ground?'—'why is it that some churches do not grow?' Are we in danger of having churches that are too big but in which there are many conversions, or causes which are too small in which there are no conversions and little progress made. Also, should we stick exclusively to the principle that seems to be implied in Acts 13:12, that is, that properly appointed elders are the only agents of church planting? Or do we by saying this deny the doctrine of sovereignty, the very truth to which we ascribe so much importance?

Geoff Thomas has been devoting some of his time to the issue of catechising—its use and abuse. Will his paper provide a major solution to the problem of a type of Christianity can be accused of being theoretical, fodder for the printing press, a matter of endless words and definitions? Is all preaching to have an experimental and practical outworking? Whether it has or not, can be discovered by catechising—by personal question asking. We will look forward to advice as to how we might employ this means more helpfully than we do at present.

(*continued on page 32*)

Compromise or Biblical Accommodation?

by Ernest C. Reisinger and Lawrence T. Spargimino

When the Gospel comes to men it demands that there be a change in their styles of life. Old fears, superstitions and practices are to give way to new joy and hope in the Lord Jesus Christ. And yet, while this is all true, it is also true that the Gospel comes to men, creatures of habit and products of their cultures. It comes to men whose practices and opinions have been moulded by their environment.

This raises a perplexing problem that has been, and will continue to be, faced by pastors and especially missionaries. The problem can be put in the form of a question: 'Must the pastor or missionary, if he is faithful to his calling, insist that every habit and custom of those to whom salvation has come be immediately abandoned? Or, does God allow His servants to accommodate these new converts in some things?' To bring the issue into even sharper focus we must ask another question: 'Is it ever permissible and morally legitimate for the pastor or missionary to forego insisting on change in certain areas until he can make an appeal for a change of behaviour on the basis of Biblical instruction and teaching which he has provided in other more important areas?'

Every man who has had souls placed under his charge has struggled with this whole issue at one time or another. If, in a given situation, he has taken a hardline approach, he may later come to feel that he should have been more accommodating and that his course of action was ill-advised. But if, on the other hand, his course of action was accommodating, his conscience may give him little rest since he has convinced himself, during many a sleepless night, that his determination to be accommodating was really motivated by a desire to win the approval of men. He thinks of the boldness of men like Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego; he thinks of John the Baptist and his fearless confrontation with Herod; he thinks of Stephen defying the Sanhedrin, and he guiltily comes to the conclusion that he has betrayed his God. More yet: he believes that he has succumbed to the sin of unbelief and charges himself with not believing that God could deliver him from the consequences of his bold stand for righteousness.

To be sure, the issue at hand is not whether or not God expects obedience of the New Covenant believer—at least this is not the issue with the authors. The absolute inability of the Law to provide power for the fulfilment of its own demands, and the fact that the Law can do nothing to relieve the imprisoning power of sin in no way eliminates the real relevance of the Law for the believer. Christ emphatically taught that obedience is part of the Christian's calling. 'If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments' (John 14:15) and, 'If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love, even as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in His love' (John 15:10). Quite to the contrary of what many would have us think, the

New Testament identifies true love to God with the keeping of his commandments (1 John 5:3; John 14:21).

It must be underscored, then, that this exposition is not a defence of antinomianism. But what we must acknowledge in this study of the biblical doctrine of accommodation is the fact that the understanding is the entrance to the will and the emotions. It is unreasonable to expect a man to act in sincerity contrary to his understanding. He may be coerced into doing something contrary to his understanding but, because this is not an act in which the will wholly consents, it cannot be said to have the quality of true devotion to the Lord Jesus.

Thus, when the Apostle prayed for the Philippians that they would 'approve things which are excellent', he preceded this with 'And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in *knowledge* and in all *judgment*' (Phil. 1:9,10). In the same way, when he prayed for the saints at Colosse, that they 'might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing'—his prior petition is that they 'might be filled with the *knowledge* of His will in all wisdom and spiritual *understanding*' (Col. 1:9,10). The Apostle knew that it was senseless to pray for growth in their Christian walk without also asking for the blessing of growth in their Christian understanding.

God does not normally work in the soul of a man independently of man's understanding. As J. Gresham Machen once wrote, 'What the Holy Spirit does in the new birth is not to make a man a Christian regardless of the evidence but, on the contrary, to clear away the mists from his eyes and enable him to attend to the evidence.' It is for this reason that in the New Testament 'conversion is not infrequently described in terms of a person's response not to Christ himself but to the 'truth'. Becoming a Christian is 'believing the truth' (2 Thess. 2:12,13), 'obeying the truth' (Rom. 2:8), 'acknowledging the truth' (2 Tim. 2:25). Paul even describes his Roman readers as having 'obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you' (Rom. 6:17).'[1]

Appropriate Christian behaviour, therefore, is organically involved with the understanding. Appropriate Christian behaviour involves a translation of knowledge into action. True knowledge is always reflected in sanctified behaviour. One cannot expect such behaviour prior to the instruction of truth, which truth must be first apprehended by the understanding to elicit the appropriate response. If the reason is misled by any falsehood of view, the moral actions will invariably be perverted in a parallel direction. And it is with this fact that an inquiry into the biblical doctrine of accommodation must begin.

After studying the Scriptures on this matter, it is clear that the bible does teach accommodation. It does appear that in certain cases God would have his servants condescend to meet man at the level of his ignorance.

But is not such a position dangerous in that it is a teaching that could most easily lead to subjectivism, relativism and/or antinomianism? However, such an objection is really no objection. Every doctrine of the bible can be perverted in this way by those who would seek to justify their lusts. Yet the abuse of a doctrine in no way militates against it. The doctrine of perseverance has been perverted by men who would seek to justify their carelessness in spiritual matters. The doctrine of justification by faith has been perverted and made to show that good works have no place in the life

of a child of God. After discoursing on this matter of justification for two and a half chapters the Apostle asks, 'Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid' (Rom. 6: 1,2). Yet the Apostle's awareness of the fact that this doctrine is open to perversion and abuse in no way causes him to be silent about it. That a doctrine of Scripture can be abused proves nothing against that doctrine. All it proves is the moral bankruptcy of the human heart and the readiness of the mind to pervert that which is wholesome and good. And so it is with the biblical doctrine of accommodation. The doctrine must stand or fall on the basis of what Scripture teaches, not on the basis of whether or not it can be abused.

Examples from Scripture

In the New Testament we see that the Apostle Paul did accommodate the spiritual immaturity of others. Paul was himself quite clear on the circumcision issue. He knew and taught that ritual circumcision was not a prerequisite to salvation, and he vehemently opposed those who taught the contrary. 'Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing' (Gal. 5:2). These Christians to whom this epistle was written had already yielded, in some measure, to the teaching of the Judaizers (4:10). He therefore reminds them of the danger of not resting on Christ alone. Yet Paul knew that circumcision in and of itself was not sinful. It was only wrong when it was performed out of the desire of gaining acceptance with God. Thus we see that the Apostle had no qualms about personally circumcising Timothy. Paul 'took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters' (Acts 16:3). As these Jews knew that Timothy's father was a Greek they therefore concluded that Timothy had not been circumcised. And Paul, desirous of not unnecessarily prejudicing the Jews against Timothy's ministry, anticipated their objections and circumcised him.

In Acts 21 there is a parallel incident. In verses 18-26 we see Paul accommodating some Jewish Christians, upon the advice and consent of James and the elders of the church at Jerusalem, by subjecting himself, along with four other men, to ritual purification. James and the elders advised Paul that he had been falsely accused by some of them as having no regard for the teaching of Moses. 'Do therefore this that we say to thee: We have four men which have a vow on them: Them take and purify thyself with them . . . and all may know that those things whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing; but that thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law' (vv. 23,24). Paul was putting into practice the principle that he penned in 1 Corinthians 9:20: 'And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law. . . .' Commenting on this Corinthian passage Charles Hodge says that 'to the Jews he became as a Jew, i.e., he acted as they acted, he conformed to their usages, observed the law, avowing at the same time that he did it as a matter of accommodation.'[2]

Paul consented to accommodating the Jewish Christians in Acts 21 because he knew that his credibility and reputation were at stake. By some public act he had to show emphatically that the charge levelled against him was not true. If Paul had decided to refuse the request of James and the elders, many, who were themselves theologically immature, would have been unnecessarily prejudiced against the Apostle. Paul

would have then been preaching under a distinct disadvantage. He would have been preaching to those who would have erroneously concluded that he had denied the faith of the fathers.

Now one might argue against Paul's actions here by saying that God saw the Apostle's consent to the request of James and the elders as nothing but compromise, and displayed his disapproval of this since he permitted Paul to be severely beaten shortly thereafter (vv. 27-31). Was not God chastising Paul for his willingness to compromise?

But these verses prove no such thing. Men may speak out boldly for righteousness and yet still suffer at the hands of their enemies. So it was with John the Baptist and Stephen. If we can argue in this way against Paul, then we can say that John was beheaded and Stephen stoned because God was chastising them for their inflexibility! And further, let us remember that Paul was no timid compromiser who would do anything to save his skin. Only a few days before, Paul refused the solicitations of his friends to stay away from Jerusalem because of the danger that he would face there (Acts 21: 11-14). No, it was not fear that prompted the Apostle to accommodate these Jewish Christians, but godly wisdom.

It may seem possible to charge the Apostle with inconsistency also. Had not Paul sharply rebuked Peter before the whole church for doing pretty much the same thing, as we read in Galatians 2:11-14? Was not Paul setting up a standard for Peter which he himself could not live by?

However, if we look at Peter's behaviour we will see that the two situations are not at all parallel. As Charles Simeon has written: 'Peter acted in a very different manner, and from very different principles. He had not only gone back to Jewish ceremonies himself, but had compelled the Gentiles also to conform to them. But St. Paul compelled no one to follow his example, he abridged no man's liberty. . . .'[4]

Nor was Paul, by his act of accommodation, undermining his life's work. Indeed, Paul's burden was to show both Jew and Gentile that the ceremonial law was abolished. It was his great burden to show that salvation is through the instrumentality of faith, not, as the Judaizers were teaching, faith plus something else. And so it may seem that Paul's attempt to accommodate these Jewish Christians did nothing but undo what was perhaps the main emphasis of his ministry. But this is not so. Again quoting from Charles Simeon, we read:

> We must distinguish between an occasional conformity to a rite for the sake of removing prejudices, and an insisting on that rite as necessary. If he had told the Jews that the ceremonial law was *necessary to be observed* in order to their salvation, he would have indeed betrayed the cause of Christ. If he had even inculcated the observance of it as *having an efficacy towards their acceptance with God*, he would then also have betrayed the cause of Christ. . . . But he merely showed, that if, on the one hand, men were not to be *saved by* their observance of the law, they would not be *condemned for it*, provided they did not rely on it for their justification before God.

We can learn much from this. Let pastors and missionaries beware of being more pious than the Bible would have them to be. Let Christians beware of thinking that faithfulness to God involves offending men as much as possible and as frequently as possible. A sincere desire to meet men where they are need not be understood as a spirit of compromise. It is all too frequently the case that Christians, in attempting to be faithful

to God by their zeal in promoting his truth, grievously offend him by their lack of love to others. We ought to remember that old customs and practices die slow deaths.

The important place of sanctification

One must remark also, that the biblical doctrine of sanctification is very relevant to this whole matter of accommodation. The Scripture does not teach instantaneous sanctification. 'Like the natural faculties both of body and mind . . . so Christian graces, or spiritual habits, are developed by exercise.'[5] Sanctification and Christian growth is a gradual, life-long process. There are different degrees of growth in grace, and no saint is perfect in this life. We find 'that so long as we are in the flesh, our attainments are less than is to be desired. In our daily reading we fall in with many obscure passages that convict us of ignorance. With this curb God keeps us modest, assigning to each a measure of faith, that every teacher, however excellent, may still be disposed to learn.'[6] Some Christians are able to receive more and bear more because some are further along in growth than others. Furthermore, some Christians have more mental ability than others, some have more formal education, and some have had the high privilege of regularly sitting under a thoroughly biblical and consistently expository ministry. To deny the legitimacy or place of accommodation is to deny the obvious.

Thus the Apostle, taking cognizance of the Corinthians' arrested growth in a specific area, could say, 'I have fed you with milk and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it' (1 Cor. 3:2). Because the Corinthians were but babes in Christ, Paul adjusted their spiritual diet accordingly. He did not want to feed them that which they could not chew. So too, could Christ say to his disciples, 'I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now' (John 16:12). To quote Calvin on this verse: as the disciples 'had nothing but his teaching to rely on, Christ tells them that he had accommodated it to their capacity.'[7]

An example from the mission fields

The principle set forth above seems to be sensibly applied and sensitively exemplified in a letter written by James Petigru Boyce, Princton student of Charles Hodge and founder of the Louisville, Kentucky, Southern Baptist Seminary, on 6th April, 1883, to Rev. P. A. Eubank, Baptist Mission House, Lagos, West Africa:

> Your fourth and fifth questions I will answer together. 'Should converted polygamists be received into the church without being required to give up their wives, except one?' I think this matter may be arranged if you will follow what I think was the plan in Apostolic days. 1. Christ was outspoken as to the necessity of monogamy. 2. So likewise were the Apostles. These two facts settle, therefore, the Christian opinion on the subject. 3. But Christianity, unlike Judaism, always interprets law with regard to a merciful dispensation of it. Consequently, when persons were found with more than one wife, they were doubtless admitted to membership.
>
> To your sixth question, as to the judgment of moral questions according to the Bible, or with regard to the moral weakness of the heathen, I reply 1. That we ought not to lower the standard of *instruction* on moral questions. . . . 2. That we should be tender and merciful in their application. While we teach rigidly what Scripture teaches, and thus raise up the banner aloft, we should yet recognise the low standard with which these have been familiar, and make allowance in dealing with them.[8]

The question of divorce

Sometimes accommodation may involve tolerating a practice while not

approving of it. Under the Old Covenant God tolerated divorce. 'When a man hath taken a wife and married her, and it came to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house' (Deut. 24:1). Yet God never sanctioned divorce. Deuteronomy 24 is not the ideal concerning marriage. Deuteronomy 24 is an example of an accommodated ethic. 'Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives; but from the beginning it was not so' (Matt. 19:8). Professor Murray raises a most relevant question about this while dealing with the Old Testament practice of polygamy. He asks:

How could God allow his people, in some cases the most eminent of Old Testament saints, to practice what was a violation of his preceptive will? It is a difficult question. Yet the position taken is the only one that satisfies the authoritative deliverance of our Lord in reference to divorce. He tells us explicitly that for the hardness of their hearts Moses suffered the Israelites to put away their wives, but that from the beginning it was not so (Matt. 19:3-8; Mark 10:2-9). If Jesus could enunciate this position in reference to divorce, there is no good reason why the same principle should not be applied to polygamy. The position would then be that because of the perversity they were permitted to take more wives than one.[9]

[1] J. Gresham Machen, *The Christian Faith in the Modern World* (Eerdmans, 1947), p. 63.
[2] Charles Hodge, *An Exposition of the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Eerdmans reprint, 1974), p. 164.
[3] Charles Simeon, *Expository Outlines on the Whole Bible* (Zondervan reprint, 1955), vol. 14, p. 539.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 540.
[5] A. A. Hodge, *Outlines of Theology* (Eerdmans reprint, 1949), p. 523.
[6] John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (Beveridge translation) Book III, chapter 2, paragraph 4.
[7] John Calvin, *The Gospel According to St. John* (Parker translation), p. 119.
[8] John A. Broadus, *Memoir of James Petigru Boyce* (Armstrong, 1893), p. 295.
[9] John Murray, *Principles of Conduct* (Tyndale, 1957), p. 17.

THE LIVING AND GROWING CHURCH (*continued from page 26*)

Reports and news of endeavours at home and abroad have been featured at previous conferences. There is no change of policy in that. Let such as are burdened for the churches to be living and growing bodies, petition the throne of grace for times of revival, and petition that the anticipated gathering at Liverpool will be such a time for all who come.

Please write to John Rubens as soon as possible about details. His address is 36 Longden Close, HAYNES, BEDFORD. A subsidised fee is available for elders. We appeal to churches to provide for their own elders to attend and those churches which are able to contribute to aid those who may have financial difficulty. Liverpool is central to Wales, Ireland and Scotland. An excellent motorway and railway service facilitates access from the south.

News from Jersey

Bill Edwards

OUR WORK HERE IN JERSEY IS THE RESULT OF A VISION OF PASTOR ROBERTS, who was one time Pastor of Halkett Place Evangelical Church in St. Helier, the capital of Jersey. The Church maintained that vision over a number of years, eventually calling me to the work in September of 1967.

The Lord in his providence confirmed the call, and the door of opportunity was opened for my wife and myself to move to Jersey in January 1968.

About a week after settling into our new environment, we began door to door visitation. This we maintained on a monthly basis for six months. During this time we planned to open a new Sunday School at the large day school on the estate where we worked. After many negotiations we were able to open on August 25th, 1968. The first Sunday forty children arrived.

At this time the doctrines of free and sovereign grace were by no means clear to us. Certainly Puritan literature was unknown to us.

After a lengthy period of door to door visitation, we both began to feel that nothing was happening in the work. We had opened our home for meetings, but Sunday after Sunday went by and no one came. It was at this time we began to think of the sovereignty of God in salvation. And one Sunday afternoon we walked through the estate, we cried to the Lord to call forth his elect. That was the beginning of a new awakening in us, and also a turning point in the work. The Lord began to work in a number of hearts. The work of saving faith was wrought in some to our great encouragement.

By 1971—under the direction of the St. Helier Fellowship—we were able to plan and commence building a house for the Lord. The work was completed by March 1972. In January 1972 we were constituted a local church under the eldership of Mr. Peter Gallaher and myself. In the past five years one more elder and four deacons have been added. And many have made good professions of faith in our blessed Saviour.

It was in 1972 through reading *George Whitefield* by Arnold Dallimore, that the doctrines of grace became clear to me.

NUMBER 40 NOV-DEC 1977

Reformation Today is a bi-monthly magazine published by Cuckfield Baptist Church, Sussex.

Editor ERROLL HULSE
5 Fairford Close, Haywards Heath, Sussex, RH16 3EF.

Assistant Editor IAN RANDALL
27 Ardingly Road, Cuckfield, Sussex, RH17 5HA.

Associate Editors DAVID KINGDON, South Africa
7 Malaga, 12 Jacobson Drive, Lynnwood Ridge, Pretoria 0002.

JOHN DAVISON, Scotland.
12 Keir Street, Perth.

JIM VAN ZYL, South Africa.
22 Verbenia Street, Lynnwood Ridge, Pretoria 0002.

STUART FOWLER, Australia.
58 Adam Crescent, Montmorency, Victoria 3094, Australia.

WAYNE MACK, U.S.A.
P.O. Box 2317, Sulphur, La. 70663, U.S.A.

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U.S.A	U.S.$5.00
CANADA	C$5.00
SOUTH AFRICA	R3.00
NEW ZEALAND	N.Z.$3.00

Single copies one-sixth the above in each case which includes postage.

Gifts are welcomed and those who wish to support the Magazine should make out their cheques to "Reformation Today".

Printed by Stanley L. Hunt (Printers) Ltd. Rushden Northamptonshire